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## New Year's Resolutions

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## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

January 4, 2011 by cpehrson

By Dr. Bryce Fifield, Director of the CPD



Every year I make a list of new year's resolutions during the first week of January. I usually include a few goals like "Eat fewer french fries", "Exercise more", and "Lose 10 pounds" to make my wife happy. A few of the goals that I've had on my list for the past several years (which I have met, by-the-way) have included "Read three books from list of great novels" and "Visit three historical sites".

This year I've added a few new goals. I plan on writing an article about the Utah pioneers who had disabilities. Over the past year or so, I've been learning a lot from journals and pioneer writings about early pioneers to this region who had disabilities. Some crossed the plains walking on artificial legs. Others who were blind held on to the back of a wagon or hand cart and walked nearly a thousand miles. A few who were frail and crippled rode in a wagon or buggy.

I've been impressed with the patience, zeal, and dedication of these early pioneers who faced the hardships that all of the early settlers in the mountain west faced, but did so with the additional challenge of significant disabilities. I've been even more impressed by the stories of the family members, friends, and neighbors of these early pioneers. There were many who helped them. There were some who literally left them along the side of the road.

The coming year is going to be fraught with many challenges. As has often been the case, our nation is split along ideological and political lines in a way that does not foster one's confidence in our ability to find common ground. I hope that we can learn from our past about how to better treat individuals with disabilities with the dignity, humanity, and respect that all deserve.

Happy New Year.

Bryce